

THE
DRAMATIC CENSOR;
OR,
Weekly Theatrical Report.

NUMBER XII.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1800.

Μέμνοσθι υποκρίτης εἰς δραματες, οἷς ἀν Θέλη ὁ διδάσκαλος.
Εὖρ γὰρ τέτ εσι, τὸ μοθὲν υποκρίνασθαι πρόσωπον καλῶς·
ἐκλεῖξασθαι δ' αὐτὸ, ἄλλε.

— — — — —
*Hae tibi erunt artes, pacique imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*

DRAMATIC WRITERS, who desire to have an EARLY Review of their Publications, are requested to send a Copy to the Editor, at JUSTINS's Printing-Office, Pemberton Row, Gough Square.

DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, March 15, 1800.

THE EGYPTIAN FESTIVAL—*Franklin.* VIRGIN UN-MASKED—*H. Fielding.*

KELLY's relinquishment of the part of *Boomley* has proved a great advantage to the New Opera. Whatever opinion this gentleman may please to entertain of his own talents as an *actor*, we can assure him that the disapprobation manifested by the audience, on the first representation, did *not* originate in their “resentment of the slight put upon a *first-rate* performer, by assigning him a part *unworthy of his transcendant abilities!*” Guttural trickery and

execution are not essential requisites in the character of a *sea-officer*: Sprightliness and animation are more congenial qualities, than *Italian* graces, shakes, and quavers! Mr. TRUEMAN looks, speaks, and acts the part with greater propriety and success. The Managers, in our opinion, are guilty of censurable remissness and neglect, in not affording this gentleman fairer and more frequent opportunities of courting the public favour.

As various alterations have been adopted in the scenic arrangements of the New Opera, we would suggest a trifling change in *Murteza's* equipment in the last scene of the third act. Instead of a *poignard*, we would recommend a *sword*, as a weapon better adapted for the leader of a troop of assailants, who storm and carry a fortress. It would, likewise, add not a little to the dignity of *Murteza's* character, to vanquish the usurper in fair and manly combat, instead of dispatching him when off his guard, like a cowardly assassin.

The only apology that can be offered for the extravagance and buffoonery, into which BANNISTER and SUETT never fail to launch in their performance of the *Virgin Unmasked*, is, that the piece itself strongly partakes of the *outré*. It ranks, indeed, among the worst productions of the author. Mrs. JORDAN played with her accustomed ability.

COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, *March 15, 1800*
SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* OSCAR AND MALVINA
—*Byrn.*

WE cordially rejoice in the popularity of Mr. MORTON's New Comedy, as the author rests his hopes upon his *own pen*, not on the *brush* of the painter, nor the *strains* of the musical composer.

DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, *March 17, 1800.*
EGYPTIAN FESTIVAL—*Franklin.* THE CITIZEN—*A. Murphy.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the fascinations of show and sound, the New Opera, with all its magnificence and sing-song, derives a powerful support from the accession of Mrs. JORDAN's acting. Her *Maria* was distinguished by justness of delineation, and a degree of *naievete*, peculiar in characters of this cast to this performer. Mr. SUETT, as *Old Philpot*, exaggerates his part, and BANNISTER abuses the partiality of the town in his favour, by his continual recurrence to *mummery*. *Corinna* is an awkward character for any actress to sustain. Fidelity of representation, in this instance, would induce obloquy, and furnish food for scandal.

COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, *March 17, 1800.*
THE BIRTH DAY—*Altered from the German, by Dibdin.* THE DEVIL TO PAY—*Coffey.* RAYMOND AND AGNES—*Farley.*

A performer, of the assumed name of *Beaumont*, made her *debut* at this Theatre in the character of

Nell. The bills announced her appearance as a *maiden* effort on *any* stage, but we understand she has been *drilled* to the service in the preparatory school in Tottenham-court Road. As an actress, she has evidently studied to form herself upon Mrs. JORDAN's model; but the resemblance exhibits, what is colloquially termed, a *coarse* rather than a *finished* likeness. For a cobler's wife, her manners are too artificial and conceited. She is, however, not altogether unqualified for low comedy, and may render herself useful in parts which require broad humour. She was favourably received, and not, upon the whole, without cause.

DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, *March 18, 1800.*

THE EGYPTIAN FESTIVAL—*Franklin.* THE APPRENTICE—*A. Murphy.*

THE *Shouting Club* scene in the Entertainment is vilely got up. With such a powerful host of *regulars* and *supernumeraries*, Drury Lane surely might afford to give a more adequate representation of the humours of these *embryo* heroes of the sock and buskin. Six or seven persons are too limited, in point of *number*, to produce the desired scenic effect; and with respect to *eccentricity*, they were too dull and spiritless, to convey the idea of a company, whose “gibes and flashes of merriment,” are competent to set the table in a roar.

After the first act, BANNISTER fell off greatly in

in his performance. He commenced well, but *cæpit is excidit ausis*. Some actors, it is well known, are in the habit of *taking the measure of the audience*, and increase or relax their efforts to please, in exact proportion to the display of rank and fashion, which grace the boxes. Such things ought not to be—

“ ‘Tis true, ‘tis pity! pity ‘tis, ‘tis true !

COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, *March 18, 1800.*
SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* THE TURNPIKE GATE
—*Knight.*

DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, *March 20, 1800.*
THE EGYPTIAN FESTIVAL—*Franklin.* THE WED-
DING-DAY—*Mrs. Inchbald.*

THE Royal Family visited the Theatre this evening, and appeared highly delighted with the performances. Mrs. JORDAN played *Lady Contest*, in the Entertainment, with inimitable address. She was received with the most unbounded applause by a very numerous and brilliant audience.

COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY *March 20, 1800.*
SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* RAYMOND AND AG-
NES—*Farley.*

Mr. MORTON’s New Comedy still retains its attraction, and secured a very full and fashionable attendance to Covent Garden, notwithstanding the Royal visit at the other Theatre.

THEATRICAL

THEATRICAL CRITICISM, &c.

Involving a candid Investigation of the Pamphlet, entitled,

“ A STATEMENT OF THE DIFFERENCES SUBSISTING BETWEEN THE PROPRIETORS AND *Eight* PERFORMERS OF THE THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.”

Given in the Correspondence that has passed between them.

[Continued from page 363.]



PERHAPS some apology may be due to our readers, for the great length to which we have extended our *Strictures* on the *manifesto* of these *malecontents*. 'Tis not that we attach that personal consequence and importance to the squabbles of the “glorious *eight*,” which the controversy may seem entitled to in *their* eyes; but in the present temper of the times, the principle on which they act becomes doubly dangerous and alarming, as tending to the utter subversion of authority and subordination. We well know the indissoluble connexion between the different classes of community. Society is held together by one vast chain of reciprocity; the destruction of any one link annihilates the perfect dependance and concatenation of the whole. Thus circumstanced, it behoves every advocate of order and salutary rule to be upon his guard; and we would wish, from the *usurping* spirit of these *soi-disant*, and, no doubt, *would-be LEADERS*,

to

to draw a lesson of caution and seasonable prevention, in cases of greater magnitude, and more universal concernment—

Tua res agitur, paries quam proximus ardet.

Reluctant, however, to trespass too long on the *distributive* principle of our plan, we shall not proportion our animadversions on the inconsistencies of these *malecontents*, to the extent and grossness of their errors. This, indeed, would be almost an endless undertaking, a more than *Herculean* labour; for, as experience has already amply proved, the task grows upon us as we advance. We shall, therefore, contract our disquisitions, and comment solely on the most prominent misrepresentations and absurdities, in which this extraordinary pamphlet so richly abounds.

In refutation of the Treasurer's remark, that “the receipt on a Benefit is in proportion to the *public estimation*, or to the *extent* of the circle of connexion each Actor may possess”—an axiom, we should have thought, which required no proof, much less admitted of contradiction—the *malecontents* alledge the *scantiness* of their incomes, and that characteristic *excess of modesty*, which prevents them from “undertaking the painful task” of explaining to their friends, the value of their patronage. Here then we have to congratulate them on *one* advantage, at least, which they have reaped from the publication. The *scantiness* of their incomes, is now *blazoned*

zoned all over the kingdom, and of course relieves them from the dreadful shock, which their *modesty* would otherwise have to encounter by entering into explanation.

The public likewise, we are happy to find, are gainers by the event. Prior to the promulgation of their grievances, the town, it appears, was continually in the dark upon the subject; and, notwithstanding the public, impelled by the same predilection for mathematics with the *malecontents*, “fell to work on calculations,” and multiplied 10 by 52, with as much facility as the Performers; still the result of the operation was imperfect and fallacious. It led to suppose, that the *individual* income of the *glorious eight*, for a *whole year's* labour, was only £520. whereas, it is now proved, that they receive a much larger sum, in the case of some of them by *two thirds*, for a service of *nine months*. They inform us, indeed, in a note, that it is in the power of the Proprietors, if they think proper, to revenge themselves on the Performers, by *cutting off their own noses*. They are, it seems, at liberty to *lessen* the income of the Actor, by *annihilating* their own. They may shut up their Theatre as many nights as they please, and *suck their thumbs*, to enjoy the superlative felicity of *starving* the Performers. They forgot to add, that the Proprietors, on the same ground of argument, have the power not only to *starve*, but to *murder* an actor, if they choose to risk their *own* neck for the pleasure of cutting the throat of *another*!

They

They now, after re-urging the fallacious plea, which we refuted, (see DRAMATIC CENSOR, page 325, &c.) that the Performer derives *no* benefit from the expence incurred by the Proprietors in the production of new and costly scenery, complain of a fresh infringement on their privileges—"The Proprietors, they tell us have, of late years, without (as they contend) *any apparent shadow of right*, laid claim to the *copy* of every new play, that an Actor may bring forward on his Benefit."—Granting this to be the case, (though we could produce instances to the contrary, as *one* of these *malecontents* very well knows, who, to provoke *curiosity*, and to give the greater zest and relish to his *Benefit bill of fare*, regaled his friends with a *Royal Olio*) we feel no hesitation to defend this conduct, on the part of the Proprietors. Would not the Performer, who has a literary friend that offers him a New Play for his Benefit, which he may think a work of merit, deem himself aggrieved, if the Manager were to interfere in the business, and exercise his right of putting a *veto* upon its representation, in case he did not, on perusal, approve of the piece? Is it then fair; is it consistent with any one fundamental principle of justice, that a Performer, through this *voluntary* surrender, *pro tempore*, of the Manager's prerogative of election and rejection, should acquire an opportunity of increasing the attractions of his Benefit, by the charms of *novelty*, (of which he reaps the *first fruits*) not only to the disadvantage of the

concern, but likewise at the contingent risque of implicating the character of the Manager? For, whatever arguments sophistry may advance, the disgrace and obloquy of bringing forward trash and nonsense on the stage, rest ultimately with the Manager, whether his want of judgment, or his supineness, in exercising his prerogative, may have sanctioned the representation. Is it not a known fact, that the Author, in tendering his play to a Performer, calculates upon great contingent advantages? Has not experience plainly demonstrated, that friendship to the individual is not the sole motive of such actions? Have not many writers, who, in the sequel, have derived large profits from the Theatre, availed themselves of this mode of public introduction? Is the trade of a play-wright attended with so little emolument, when once established, as to warrant not even the risque of a little *authorship* in the acquirement? May not the composition of a *Benefit play* be considered as the *capital*, or *stock*, which the dramatist embarks in a speculation of gain? Where then is the injustice, on the part of the Proprietors, in imposing such restrictions on the influx of *Benefit plays*, as shall compel the author to look forward to *future advantage*; and, of course, furnish an additional security against precipitation and absurdity, by making his chance of gain depend upon the *merit* of that production, which, through the medium of his friend's Benefit, he has an opportunity of *smuggling* upon the stage, without the approbation
of

of the Manager? The very tenor of their complaint, (to say nothing of the *unreasonableness* of the *implied* requisition) that they “cannot avail themselves of the *first* performance of a new play, because the Proprietors, if it succeeds, claim it as their own,” proves, that the author does not make his offer from motives of *disinterested* friendship. Are the Proprietors then to furnish a writer with the means of commencing his dramatic career, at the hazard of their responsibility; and, after suffering the Performer to reap the profits of *nove'ty*, by the *first* night’s representation, to purchase a play, produced without their concurrence, on the same terms, as a piece which has passed through the regular routine of critical scrutiny, and to which they have given their formal assent and approbation? The case speaks for itself, without farther comment.

A most curious argument now follows, in plea for an abatement of their Benefit charges, which that *excessive modesty* they before made such a vaunt of, might, we think, have counselled them to suppress. As the Proprietors, for reasons of delicacy, we suppose, did not think proper to accede to their requisition for a detailed account of every *item* of expence attendant on a Benefit, the *malecontents* are resolved to prove, that they labour under no scruples of this nature, but are ready to produce, even to their *hot-house score*, a full specification of every *item* of expence incurred by themselves, in securing

a *Benefit bumper*. They are obliged (see page 39) not only “to go a begging from door to door, with un-“wearied industry, through the whole circle of their “acquaintance, but must, in addition to the bodily “fatigue and hardship they encounter in the course “of their *mendicant pilgrimage*, submit to *play the buffoon*, and exhibit in alehouses and other *public* “companies those *great* convivial talents with “which nature has endowed them. Now all this, “as they very justly observe, cannot be done without the expence of many a pot of porter; and “sometimes, no doubt, a more powerful cordial to “keep them in spirits:”—it glads us to collect from this passage, that the *glorious eight* do not *de-mean* themselves by calling upon the company to *pay the piper*, but make a *Yorkshire club* of it!—“nay, “what is much worse than expence, frequently “leads to more injurious consequences; to wit, “the loss of health, and various other evils attendant on intoxication.”

“ Yet, driven to these *hard* resources, (we quote the very words of the *malecontent LEADERS*) the Proprietors insist on participating in profits so painfully—they might have added, and so disgracefully—earned!” In this particular, instead of attempting to vindicate the Proprietors, we should rather feel ourselves inclined (were we vain enough to suppose that our suggestion would have any weight) to recommend a reasonable reduction of a few shillings, in consequence of the recent advance
in

in the price of porter. The rise of one halfpenny per pot, in an article of such necessary consumption with *convivial* benefit-mendicants, may be supposed to amount, in the course of the season, to a sum which must make a considerable defalcation in the receipts of these *glorious eight*; some of whom, it appears from their Statement, realized nearly £400, on their Benefit nights, and not one of them *less* than £200.

"Oh, shame! where is thy blush?"

We shall not trespass on the patience of our readers, by following the *malecontents* through their meandering course; nor, with them, tread over the beaten track which they have so repeatedly pursued before. Their *Benefit squabble* is supported with such vile, disgraceful arguments, that for the honour of the profession, we could sincerely wish the custom were abolished altogether. The inference they draw from the case of Mr. MURRAY, who, it seems, declined a Benefit, is totally irrelavent. This performer, whom they with truth style a *principal* actor, (a title to which he possesses the fairest claim, though he entertains too just a sense of *duty* and of *gratitude* to enroll his name in the muster of these *malecontent Ringleaders*) is a gentleman of a high and manly spirit: his London connexions were respectable, but few: his walk is in the more dignified sphere of the drama: *buffoonery* and *sing-song*—which, as experience amply proves, constitute the main pillars on which an actor rests his hopes of a lucrative

tive benefit—are totally foreign to his line of acting. Thus circumstanced, and disdaining to have recourse to those *convivial* stratagems, on which we above commented, he preferred the trifling sum of £30. *independantly* obtained, to the chance of realizing ten times that amount by practices which, in his eye, bore the appearance of meanness and ignominy. Disclaiming every *personal* allusion, we sincerely wish all other *principal* and *leading* actors would display the same manliness and nobleness of mind.

Here then, just pausing a moment to contradict, in terms flat, positive and most decided, the assertion, (see page 42) that the proprietors of Covent-Garden proceed upon the same system, which brought about the suspension of Mr. CHRISTOPHER RICH*, we dismiss their *Benefit squabbles*, and proceed to the next alledged cause of complaint—the increased fine of £30. for the refusal of a character.

It is the fate of all human institutions, even in their best regulated form, to be liable to perversion and abuse. All that the most consummate wisdom can atchieve, to guard against mal-practice, is to arrange a system, which shall connect *profit* with *fair-dealing*, and make a man's *interest* the guarantee of his *integrity*. Hence we are willing to allow, that *theoretically*, a large fine might become the engine of oppression. But the *malecontents* must give us leave

* On this subject we have already explained ourselves in our ninth number, page 305. We refer the reader, who wishes to obtain a fuller account of this transaction, to *Cibber's Apology*.

to doubt the practical probability of such an event. The common experience of human nature does not warrant us to suppose, that the Proprietors would sacrifice their interest, their profits, and their hopes, to the silly and ruinous caprice of “equalizing professional talents, and humiliating their *principal Performers.*” Men are not apt, on the general scale of action, to purchase malicious pleasure at the expense of their own destruction.

But though not *probable*, a case of this nature, as the Performers justly contend, is not *impossible*. Granted; and to prove the imminency of the danger which menaces them, and the strong ground of alarm which such a possibility holds out, they advance one *single, solitary* instance, which occurred many years since. The *Picture of Paris* is the only case in point they can adduce, from the whole compass of their experience.

Thus far we have taken up the argument in its disadvantageous light, as reflecting on the Proprietors. Let us now proceed to a comparative review of the two evils, and examine from which quarter abuse is most likely to originate; whether on the part of the Managers or the Performers.

The *malecontents*, clamorous as they are in their complaints of oppression and ill-treatment, have only been able to produce *one* case in which the fine was made an engine of compulsory degradation: and even in this *solitary* case, it appears that two of the Performers, to whom parts in the pantomime

mime were assigned, persisted in their refusal, and remained *unmulcted*. It appears further, from the letter of the Treasurer, (page 19) which we consider as competent evidence, the *malecontents* themselves acquiescing in the truth of his assertion, that this fine has not been exacted more than five times at the utmost, during the course of the last fourteen years; a circumstance which, in our humble apprehensions, does not betray any strong disposition, on the part of the Manager, to convert this clause into an “engine of oppression.”

This tardiness to enforce the payment of the fine, or rather the *rarity* of its enforcement, forms, we confess, a point on which we feel inclined to lay great stress. The *malecontents*, however, are of a contrary opinion. They tell us, that this forbearance originates less in the generosity and liberality of the Manager, than in his dread, forsooth, of the consequences. “As a Performer (they write page 49) can have* *little* motive for refusing a character fit for him, it is most likely, that when a refusal has

taken

* This declaration comes with peculiar grace from the *reputed author* of this elegant pamphlet. To show how impossible it is for a Performer to refuse a part from *capricious* motives, or sometimes from motives even *worse than capricious*, from jealousy, envy, and dislike, we need only appeal to the conduct of a certain actor, who rejected a character in a very popular Comedy produced last season, because Mr. *****, as he observed, had a *better part than himself!* Surely, when *Actors* invest themselves with the prerogative of the *Manager*; when they presume to decide upon the fitness or unfitness of

taken place, the Managers, conscious of having urged an improper measure, have had the *discretion* to withhold their error from the *discussion**, which would have accompanied the enforcement of the penalty."

But it is to the *augmented* fine of £30. not to the *old* sum of £5. that they object. As the difference in the amount may, to a superficial observer, appear greater than what necessity demands, we shall briefly point out the magnitude of the evil, which this *augmented* fine is intended to prevent.

We have already shewn—notwithstanding their unfounded assertion, "that an actor can have *little*

of the parts assigned them; when the peace and good order; nay, we might say, the very existence of the Theatre in a pecuniary point of view, are endangered by the whim, the folly, the obstinacy and rancour of *usurping* individuals, it becomes high time to oppose a more effectual check to their misconduct, than the trifling penalty of Five Pounds—a sum so low and insignificant, especially when compared with the advantages derivable, in the case of those who follow (as many of them do) other occupations, from the long *vacation* they obtain by the refusal of a character in a play, that experiences a run of many weeks—that the payment of the *original* penalty becomes a speculation of considerable gain. It is further worthy of notice, that notwithstanding the said disproportion in the magnitude and risque of the undertaking, between a London and a Provincial Theatre, the penalty for refusing a character at Bath, is double the now existing fine at Covent-Garden Theatre.

* 'Tis greatly to be regretted, that the *malecontents* have not explained themselves more fully on this head. Are we to understand by this *terrible discussion*, which the *discretion* of the Manager teaches him most anxiously to avoid, the *fulminating eloquence* of —, or the *galling pen* of the valorous and redoubted *Red-Cross Knight*?

motive for refusing a character—that a Performer not only *may* and *can*, but frequently *actually does*, from base, ungenerous motives, reject a part to the great embarrassment of the Manager, and, in some cases, to the detriment, or at least risk of the play. This conduct becomes doubly dangerous in the instance of new plays, it being of late years the custom of the stage, to invert the true principles of dramatic composition. Instead of the actor conforming himself to the author, the author is subservient to the actor: and 'tis now a common practice with authors to *write*, as it is termed, *i. e.* to adapt his parts expressly to the style and manner of particular actors, who have won by their merit, or their buffoonery, on the good will of the town. Hence the reader will easily perceive, that where a play has been constructed upon this principle, the capricious refusal of an actor may be productive of the most serious and even fatal consequences. We might instance a variety of plays, that depend entirely on the exertions of some particular *individual* for their popularity; the capricious *secession*, or *refusal* of that individual, of course, must sensibly affect the interest of the play, and, perhaps, destroy the hopes of the parties interested in its success. Under these circumstances, we beg leave to ask, whether the penalty of £5. for rejecting a part, is a sufficient security (the Performer continuing all the time in the regular receipt of his wages) either to the author or to the Proprietors, that their profits and expectations shall not be wantonly

wantonly sacrificed to the whim of a jealous, or a lazy, a conceited, or a careless individual?

Again, it ought to be considered, that the refusal of a character, is not an act of mere *single* disloyalty, but very often begets, in the complicated economy of a Theatre, a series of inconveniences. It may, for instance, happen, that the Performer who succeeds to the part rejected by his *malecontent* comrade, had previously a cast in the play. Here then is a double derangement of plan, which, in its effects, may operate to a complete subversion of the original design. It requires no very intimate acquaintance with the mysteries of a Theatre to conceive, that such occurrences must be attended with many disagreeable circumstances, and occasion much vexation and trouble to the Manager. Whether then, is it most consistent with prudence and sound policy, that the peace and good government of a Theatre should be exposed to perpetual invasion, and lie at the mercy of every perverse and captious *malecontent*, with no other security than the pitiful fine of five pounds, which the offender may easily convert into an additional source of emolument; or, that proper caution should be employed to guard against anarchy, rebellion, and usurpation, by enhancing the punishment of mutiny, and raising the forfeit of revolt from Five Pounds to Thirty? Admitting even the possibility of an extreme case, against which the Manager's own interest furnishes competent security—but admitting, for the sake of

argument, that the Proprietors might be induced to frustrate their own hopes, for the pleasure of mortifying and humiliating a *principal* Performer—still we should, for the reasons we shall now state, decide in favour of the new regulations. The case we have adverted to is merely and entirely *hypothetical*; the complainants themselves have not adduced one *single* instance to prove, that the Manager ever availed himself of the fine to “extort a *part*, much less the *whole* (see page 47) of a Performer’s salary.” We, on the other hand, have brought forward *facts*, in which the *head-malecontent*, and his confederates, are deeply implicated, in proof that great offence has been committed on their part. Admitting therefore, the *possibility* of abuse on *one* side, the *actual* guilt and delinquency on the *other*, the question at once resolves into this plain and simple deduction—
Whether is chance or certainty the surest clue?—contingency or fact, the best criterion? Of a certain or a possible calamity, which shall I prefer? The answer is ready, and at hand—“of two evils, take the least*.”

Having, for obvious reasons—reasons, indeed, which

* The *malcontents* advance a *curious* argument, if we may be pardoned the *mismomer* we commit in the use of that term, in justification of a *part* of their body, who rebel against the clauses and provisions to which they had given their sanction by a *legal* act. “They would never have consented (we are told page 50) to sign the clauses, enacting the *augmented* fine, provided they could have obtained an engagement without going through this ceremony.”

which we sufficiently explained—given a Copy of the Deed of Agreement between the Proprietors and the Performers of Covent-Garden Theatre, the *malecontents* will pardon us, if we deem it unnecessary, with respect to their squabble about *Orders*, to follow them through all their sophistical turnings and windings, to make good their pretensions to a claim, to which they possess no just right or title. Let them boast as they please of their privileges, immunities, and prerogatives, still we shall contend, that a privilege, not sanctioned nor secured by the tenor of their contract, and emanating solely from the liberality of the Proprietors, is an *indulgence*, not a *right*. The very historical account they give us of the fluctuations, revolutions, and changes, which have obtained in the exercise of this *indulgence*, amply proves, that it is a *favour*, not a *claim*. And they are expressly assured by Mr. HARRIS, in his first letter to the *malecontents*, (see page 5—pity 'tis he ever entered into negotiations with such refractory *delegates*) that it was the intention of the Proprietors “not to curtail that *indulgence*. On the contrary, that *Orders* should be, at least, as current as

mony.” We give them credit for their *sincerity*; the same remark, we make no doubt, applies to all the penalties and forfeits for misconduct and disobedience, which they have been compelled to sign. Nay more, the same remark extends to persons who raise money upon their bond. There are doubtless many individuals in this metropolis, and elsewhere, who would gladly dispense with incurring the responsibility of a bond, if they could persuade the money-lender to accommodate them without this ceremony.

formerly,”

formerly," &c. Yet nothing can satisfy them. They appear to have adopted the celebrated aphorism of Cæsar for their rule of conduct—

“ Aut Cæsar, aut nullus.”

Aware of the unpleasant consequences attached to lawless combinations and conspiracies, for the purpose of extortion, they very prudently disclaim the attempts laid to their charge of endeavouring to augment their rebel forces, by working on the fears and hopes of their comrades. “ We can only answer such charge (they reply page 58) by asserting its falsehood, and defying its proof. They, who continue tamely to submit to oppression in this land of freedom and justice, are the objects of *our pity**, not our threats.” We have already observed, that threats and menaces are not the only modes of compulsion, which may be successfully resorted to on such

* Haply, these “ *glorious eight*,” exalted as they now appear, whilst with a look of mingled commiseration and contempt, they look down on the *swinish multitude* of the profession, may, by a theatrical revolution, become objects of *pity* in their turn. Well-wishers as we are to their *individual* prosperity, we sincerely hope, that the high interference they have solicited to prevent their deliverance from that system of oppression, which they so pathetically deplore, (we are well apprised of the nature of the concluding clause in the memorial presented by the *malecontents* to the Lord Chamberlain, in which they throw themselves upon his *pity*, as *lost men*, if his lordship should desert them; and we are likewise acquainted with the purport of that nobleman’s answer, expressing his willingness to step forward as an *intercessor* with the Proprietors, in their behalf) may be successfully exerted to obtain a bill of *general amnesty* in their favour.

There

such occasions. Obloquy, disdain, sarcasm, sneer, and bitter taunts, offer a very effectual mode of harassing the feelings of the *loyal* part of the company, and forcing them to join the standard of revolt. There is such a thing (the *malecontents* will readily comprehend our meaning) as *sending a man to Coventry!*

We meet now with some slight remarks, *en passant*, on the stale and hacknied subject of their *Benefit receipts*; the amount of which, they observe, it is out of the Treasurer's power to ascertain. In deducting the expence of advertisements, bills, tickets, &c. from their profits, they certainly proceed upon just and reasonable grounds. But when, to heighten the colouring of their grievances, they talk of the drawbacks they sustain, by the neglect of payment, in some instances, and the tickets which are *given away* in others, they forget to complete the statement, by taking into the account the number of tickets, which are paid for at more than *double price*. It is true, neither Mr. HUGHES, nor ourselves, can pretend to determine "what tickets are *given away*, and what are *sold*"—but as little can we ap-

There is nothing *ominous*, we hope, in the dinner given to the *malecontent delegates* of Covent-Garden, by certain officious characters of the Sister Theatre. We hope they are not actually and irretrievably in the predicament pointed out by the ingenious writer of the following epigram, which appeared in the *True Briton*—

"The *treat* came well from Drury-Lane,
To quell the Covent-Garden mutter;
Since all the grumbling guests, 'tis plain,
Have quarrell'd with their *bread and butter!*"

preciate,

preciate, on the other hand, their *surplus* * profits. They know, and we know, that a Performer's friends, in token of their gratitude for his liberal accommodation of *Orders*, often avail themselves of his Benefit, to convert *payment* into the more delicate form of a *fee*. A piece of gold, or a bank note, may be very conveniently tendered on such occasions, as the price of a couple of tickets, without the ceremony of waiting for the change.

[*To be Concluded in our next.*]

* No men ever better understood, or more systematically availed themselves of that knowledge, when to *speak*, or when to be *silent*, than these *malecontents*. Claimorous in their demands, they court *publicity*, even at the expence of *decorum*: and at the very moment that their cause is pending with the **LORD CHAMBERLAIN**, appeal to the town at large on the identical subjects, on which they had solicited that nobleman's arbitration. But when the answer vouchsafed by the **CHAMBERLAIN** does not accord with their ambitious *hopes*, then indeed they have too just a sense of the veneration due to that exalted character to publish any document in which his Lordship is concerned, without his express licence and permission. Then they can be dumb, and keep "that within which passeth show." Then, indeed, galled with discomfiture, they proclaim in a public advertisement their determination not to notice any remarks which may come from any member of that public to which they, prior to their miscarriage, so confidently, so arrogantly, so indecently appealed. The tables are now completely turned; and now, forsooth, they will pay no attention to any expostulation, which does not immediately and avowedly proceed from the Proprietors of **Covent-Garden Theatre**. We honour their sense of propriety, and still more applaud their *discretion*, in not publishing the *memorial* of their own disgrace. They are now reduced to the dreadful alternative of *courting the yoke*, at which they a short time since so indignantly spurned. Thus circumstanced, *silence* is the best and safest course they can possibly pursue. We pity them as individuals, and hope, if permitted to retain their situations, they will approve themselves less after the manner of a *stiff-necked generation!*